WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An impregnated fibrous veil, comprising:

a nonwoven fibrous veil including a prebinder and reinforcing fibers selected from a group consisting of glass fibers, ceramic fibers, and mixtures thereof, said nonwoven fibrous veil having at least one face impregnated with a surface finish formulation including about 50 to about 95 weight percent filler, about 5 to about 50 weight percent binder and about 0 to about 10 percent optical brightener.

2. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 1, further characterized by an air porosity of at least 1,500 l/m^2s at 1 m Bar pressure.

3. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 2, wherein microspheres are substantially absent from said surface finish formulation.

4. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 1, wherein said impregnated fibrous veil is further characterized by a compressibility ratio of 1.2 or less between 0.5 and 25.0 kPa pressure.

5. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 2, wherein said impregnated fibrous veil has a thickness of 0.5 mm or less at 0.5 kPa.

6. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 3 wherein said nonwoven fibrous veil includes about 5 to about 20 weight percent prebinder and between about 80 to about 95 weight percent reinforcing fibers.

7. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 4, wherein said prebinder includes bonding fibers.

8. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 4, wherein said prebinder includes thermoplastic bonding fibers.

9. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 4, wherein said prebinder includes bicomponent fibers.

10. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 4 wherein said prebinder is selected from a group of materials consisting of a water soluble binder, an emulsion binder, polymers and copolymers of styrene, butadiene, acrylic and methacrylic monomers, vinyl acetate, polyesters, polyvinyl alcohols, melamin formaldehyde resins, urea formaldehyde resins and mixtures thereof.

11. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 5 wherein said reinforcing fibers have a diameter between about 6.5 and about 16.0 microns and a length between about 4 and about 18 mm.

12. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 11, wherein said filler is an inorganic filler that is dispersable in water.

13. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 12, wherein said inorganic filler has an average particle size in the range of about 0.1 to about 10.0 microns.

14. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 13, wherein said filler is selected from a group consisting of calcium carbonate, aluminum trihydrate, titanium dioxide, magnesium hydroxide, silicium oxide, clay, talc and mixtures thereof.

15. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 14, wherein said binder includes both thermosetting and thermoplastic resins.

16. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 14, wherein said binder is a water dispersable emulsion type binder or a solution type binder.

17. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 14, wherein said binder is selected from a group of materials consisting of a water soluble binder, an emulsion binder, polymers and copolymers of styrene, butadiene, acrylic and methacrylic monomers, vinyl acetate, polyesters, polyvinyl alcohols, melamin formaldehyde resins, urea formaldehyde resins and mixtures thereof.

18. A method of producing an impregnated fibrous veil with a smooth surface finish, comprising:

impregnating at least one face of a nonwoven fibrous veil including a prebinder and reinforcing fibers with a surface finish formulation including about 50 to about 95 weight percent filler, about 5 to about 50 weight percent binder and about 0 to about 10 weight percent optical brightener.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein said impregnating step includes applying said surface finish formulation to said at least one face of said nonwoven fibrous veil at a rate of between about 15.0 and 55.0 g/m^2.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein said impregnating step includes feeding said nonwoven fibrous veil in-line during said applying step.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein said impregnating step includes drying and consolidating said impregnated fibrous veil following said applying step.

22. The method of claim 18 further including producing a nonwoven fibrous veil and performing said impregnating step inline with said nonwoven fibrous veil production.